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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 7, 2005

**TEN MEMBERS OF READING DRUG RING INDICTED – FIFTH MAJOR DRUG ORGANIZATION CHARGED IN BERKS COUNTY UNDER
*PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS***

READING – United States Attorney Patrick L. Meehan, Berks County District Attorney Mark Baldwin, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Philadelphia Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Jack Eckenrode, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Philadelphia Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco Firearms, and Explosives Mark Potter, and Reading Chief of Police Charles Broad, today announced the unsealing of a twenty-two-count superseding indictment¹ charging 10 defendants with operating a major drug ring, the "WELMAKER CRACK COCAINE ORGANIZATION," centered in Reading, Pennsylvania. Each of the defendants is charged in the indictment with conspiracy to distribute in excess of 50 grams of "crack" cocaine that subjects each defendant to a maximum sentence of life imprisonment, a 10-year mandatory minimum, a \$4,000,000 fine, and up to lifetime supervised release on this count alone.

"This was a violent, well-armed, mobile organization that would simply change locations when police were closing in," said Meehan. "Our ability under *Project Safe Neighborhoods* to unite federal, state, and local law enforcement is having a profound impact on our communities because we are removing violent offenders from our streets. We're targeting not just individuals but entire organizations."

The indictment specifically alleges that between January of 2002 and March of 2005, KELVIN and JAMARR WELMAKER controlled the gang that distributed more than \$3,000,000 of crack cocaine by delivering drugs to customers in the Reading area in response to orders placed by calling cell phones used by the organization. KELVIN WELMAKER and his brother, JAMARR WELMAKER, purchased large amounts of crack cocaine from suppliers in the Reading area, which they and co-defendants, JULIAN ACOSTA, MICHAEL KEITH BOWEN, ROGEL GRANT, DANTE JACKSON, RANDY DALE JACKSON, LUIS DANIEL MARERRO, ALPHA OUMAR SACKO and ANTOINE LAMAR SHIRLEY, distributed to retail customers in the Reading area. After the police raided a number of the group's crack houses, the organization switched its operation to sales from vehicles staffed by the members of the group. Customers called a cell phone to place orders and arrange a meeting place. The defendants would then meet the customers and deliver the crack cocaine. Members of the Welmaker Organization routinely

¹ An indictment is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

carried firearms to protect their operation from competing drug dealers. Seven firearms were seized from members of the conspiracy.

The defendants charged include:

KELVIN WELMAKER,
a/k/a "KK,"
JAMARR DELMONT WELMAKER,
Julian ACOSTA,
a/k/a "Dooley,"
Michael Keith BOWEN,
a/k/a "Bubby,"
Rogel GRANT,
a/k/a "Bradley,"
Dante JACKSON,
Randy Dale JACKSON,
Luis Daniel MAREERO,
a/k/a "Danny,"
Alpha Oumar SACKO,
a/k/a "Binks,"
Antoine Lamar SHIRLEY,
a/k/a "Stink."

This is the fifth indictment of a major drug organization in Berks County since the inception of Project Safe Neighborhoods in 2002. To date, as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, 107 defendants have been charged federally and another 165 have been charged locally. As a result of this effort, and other efforts by the Reading Police Department, murders have been reduced 33 percent since 2001. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a joint initiative by the United States Attorney's Office, the Berks County District Attorney's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, the Reading Police Department, the Berks County Sheriffs Department, and other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to identify and prosecute firearms offenders in federal court, where the defendants are likely to receive a substantial sentence upon conviction. This investigation was initiated by the F.B.I. led Reading Area Violent Crime Task Force (RAVCTF). The RAVCTF, comprised of the above agencies, was established to assist local law enforcement agencies in Berks County in combating violent crime, and has been targeting violence associated with gangs and drugs.

The Pennsylvania National Guard Counter-Drug Program provided both personnel and equipment to aid in the investigation that lead to this indictment.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE DEFENDANTS

NAME	ADDRESS	AGE OR DATE OF BIRTH
KELVIN WELMAKER, a/k/a "KK"	W. Douglas Street, Reading, PA	1/23/1982
JAMARR DELMONT WELMAKER	W. Oley Street, Reading, PA	12/25/1982
JULIAN ACOSTA	W. Oley Street, Reading, PA	4/4/1986
MICHAEL KEITH BOWEN	N. 2nd Street, Reading, PA	06/24/1986
ROGEL GRANT	Walnut Street, Reading, PA	12/29/1979
DANTE JACKSON	Buttonwood Street, Reading, PA	12/11/1985
RANDY DALE JACKSON	N. 5 th Street, Reading, PA	4/22/1982
LUIS DANIEL MARERRO	Buttonwood Street, Reading, PA	01/10/1979
ALPHA OUMAR SACKO	E. Wyomissing Boulevard, Reading, PA	4/12/1985
ANTOINE LAMAR SHIRLEY	Old Wyomissing Road, Reading, PA	10/28/1982

A detailed description of the potential sentences is attached.

The case has been assigned to Assistant United States Attorney Francis C. Barbieri, Jr., and Special Assistant United States Attorney M. Theresa Johnson.

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AT [HTTP://WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/PAE](http://www.usdoj.gov/usa/pae)***

NAME	MAXIMUM SENTENCE
KELVIN WELMAKER, a/k/a “KK”	Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum of 35 years imprisonment, a \$10,500,000 fine, a mandatory minimum of five years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release, an \$800 special assessment
JAMARR DELMONT WELMAKER	Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum of 35 years imprisonment, a \$6,500,000 fine, a mandatory minimum of five years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release, a \$500 special assessment
JULIAN ACOSTA	Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum of 10 years imprisonment, a \$6,000,000 fine, a mandatory minimum of five years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release, a \$300 special assessment
MICHAEL KEITH BOWEN	Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum of 10 years imprisonment, a \$9,000,000 fine, a mandatory minimum of six years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release, a \$300 special assessment
ROGEL GRANT	Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum of 10 years imprisonment, a \$9,000,000 fine, a mandatory minimum of five years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release, a \$400 special assessment
DANTE JACKSON	Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum of 15 years imprisonment, a \$8,250,000 fine, a mandatory minimum of six years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release, a \$700 special assessment
RANDY DALE JACKSON	Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum of 15 years imprisonment, an \$8,250,000 fine, a mandatory minimum of five years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release, a \$500 special assessment
LUIS DANIEL MARERRO	Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum of 10 years imprisonment, a \$4,000,000 fine, a mandatory minimum of five years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release, a \$100 special assessment
ALPHA OUMAR SACKO	Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum of 10 years imprisonment, a \$7,000,000 fine, a mandatory minimum of five years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release, a \$300 special assessment

NAME	MAXIMUM SENTENCE
ANTOINE LAMAR SHIRLEY	Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum of 15 years imprisonment, a \$6,250,000 fine, a mandatory minimum of five years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release, a \$400 special assessment